

King County Emergency Medical Services  
Addition to Patient Care Guidelines for Basic Life Support  
Effective April, 2004

**Glucometry**

**Introduction:** Glucometry is a simple minimally invasive method of determining blood glucose levels. This is accomplished by placing a small amount of the blood on a testing strip that is then analyzed by the glucometer device.

**Indications for use:** Anytime EMTs encounter patients with **altered levels of consciousness**. This may include patients with the following:

- Unconsciousness
- Suspected diabetic related problem
- Signs and symptoms of stroke
- Suspicion of drug and ETOH intoxication
- Any other time the EMT feels that the blood sugar level needs to be assessed to aid in the evaluation of the patient.

**Contraindications:** Children less than 5 years of age

**Use and application:** Following the glucometer manufactures recommendation, clean a fingertip with an alcohol pad and allow to completely dry. Grasp finger near area to be pricked and squeeze for a few seconds. Prick side of fingertip with sterile lancet device and squeeze gently to obtain drop of blood. Place drop of blood on device test strip and allow for reading. Be extra careful to avoid blood flipping from test strip onto face or eyes. Dispose of lancet in approved biohazard container. Record ALL glucose readings on Medical Incident Report Form.

**Under no circumstances should the presence of a blood glucose monitor detract from basic patient care. Blood glucose evaluation should be performed after the ABC's and initial assessment have been completed.**

**Treat the patient, not the glucometer**

**If the patient is treated with oral glucose you must obtain a repeat glucose level.**

**Patients on oral hypoglycemic agents who are initially found to be hypoglycemic may experience another episode of hypoglycemia (due to the long half-life of the medications) and therefore should be strongly advised to have further medical evaluation by a physician.**

**Patients on insulin may safely be left at home if they respond completely and have a normal repeat glucose and if someone will be in attendance. If you decide it is safe to leave the patient at the scene you must complete an after-care instruction sheet to be left with the patient.**